AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-60. **(Canceled)**

61.   **(Currently Amended)** A content duplication management apparatus that manages content duplications performed on an apparatus, comprising:

a request receiving unit configured to receive, from the apparatus, a management request indicating one of a duplication request for duplicating a content or a deletion request for deleting the content;

a management unit configured to execute the management request received from said request receiving unit in order of arrival;

a holding unit configured to hold duplication restriction information indicating a number of permitted content duplications, wherein

said management unit,

(1)   when the management request that has been received first among the management requests that have not been executed is the deletion request, adds a predetermined value to the number of permitted content duplications, and

(2)   when the management request that has been received first is the duplication request and

(i)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is greater than the predetermined value, duplicates the content for the apparatus, and subtracts the predetermined value from the ~~umber~~ number indicated by the duplication restriction information,

(ii)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is less than the predetermined value, rejects the duplication request, and

(iii)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is less than the predetermined value and the deletion request exists subsequent to the duplication request, executes, on an exceptional basis, the deletion request prior to the duplication request, and adds the predetermined value to the number indicated by the duplication restriction information,

wherein

said management unit,

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(1)   when the management request is the duplication request and the apparatus is judged to belong to a predetermined group, and

(i)   if the in-group remaining number is not zero, duplicates the content for the apparatus, and subtracts the predetermined value from the in-group remaining number, and

(ii)   if the in-group remaining number is zero, rejects the management request, and

(2)   when the management request is the duplication request and the apparatus is judged to not to belong to the predetermined group, and

(i)   if the out-group remaining number is not zero, duplicates the content for the apparatus, and subtracts the predetermined value from the out-group remaining number, and

(ii)   if the out-group remaining number is zero, rejects the management request.

62.   **(Previously Presented)** The content duplication management apparatus of Claim 61, wherein

said management unit further duplicates the content for the apparatus that has requested the duplication request, and subtracts the predetermined value from the number indicated by the duplication restriction information, after executing the deletion request prior to the duplication request, and adds the predetermined value to the number indicated by the duplication restriction information.

63.   **(Currently Amended)** The content duplication management device of Claim 61, wherein

the duplication restriction information includes an in-group remaining number and an out-group remaining number, and

said management unit judges whether or not the apparatus belongs to the a-predetermined group when the predetermined value is either added to or subtracted from the number indicated by the duplication restriction information, and

(1)   if the apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group, either increases or decreases the in-group remaining number, and

(2)   if the apparatus is judged to not belong to the predetermined group, either

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increases or decreases the out-group remaining number.

64.   **(Canceled)**

65.   **(Currently Amended)** The content duplication management apparatus of Claim 63, wherein

said management unit, when the management request is the deletion request, and

(1)   if the apparatus is judged to belong to the <u>predetermined </u>group, adds the predetermined value to the in-group remaining number, and

(2)   if the apparatus is judged not to belong to the <u>predetermined </u>group, adds the predetermined value to the out-group remaining number.

66.   **(Previously Presented)** The content duplication management apparatus of Claim 61, further comprising:

an acquisition unit configured to acquire a start time of a processing of the management request; and

a time management unit configured to cause said management unit to execute the management request corresponding to the start time, at the start time.

67.   **(Previously Presented)** The content duplication management apparatus of Claim 61, comprising:

an acquisition unit configured to acquire a usage expiry date of the content; and

a time management unit configured to cause said management unit to increase the number indicated by the duplication restriction information when the usage expiry date has passed.

68.   **(Previously Presented)** The content duplication management apparatus of Claim 63, wherein

said management unit further notifies, to the apparatus, transfer information showing (i)

at least a number that is less than the in-group remaining number and (ii) at least a number that is less than the out-group remaining number, and subtracts each of the numbers shown by the transfer information from the in-group remaining number and the out-group remaining number, respectively.

69.   **(Currently Amended)** The content duplication management apparatus of Claim 63, wherein

said content duplication management apparatus is connected to a network, and

further includes an acquisition unit configured to acquire the content from outside a home network, and

said management unit judges that an apparatus connected to the home network belongs to the predetermined group, in the judgment of whether or not the apparatus belongs to the predetermined group.

70.   **(Currently Amended)** A content duplication management method for managing content duplications performed on an apparatus, comprising:

a request receiving step of receiving, from the apparatus, a management request indicating one of a duplication request for duplicating a content or a deletion request for deleting the content;

a management step of executing the management request received from a request receiving unit in order of arrival;

a holding step of holding duplication restriction information indicating a number of permitted content duplications, wherein

in the management step,

(1)   when the management request that has been received first among the management requests that have not been executed is the deletion request, a predetermined value is added to the number of permitted content duplications, and

(2)   when the management request that has been received first is the duplication request and

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(i)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is greater than the predetermined value, the content is duplicated for the apparatus, the predetermined value is subtracted from the number indicated by the duplication restriction information,

(ii)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is less than the predetermined value, the duplication request is rejected, and

(iii)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is less than the predetermined value and the deletion request exists subsequent to the duplication request, the deletion request is executed on an exceptional basis prior to the duplication request, and the predetermined value is added to the number indicated by the duplication restriction information, and

wherein

the management step,

(1)   when the management request is the duplication request and the apparatus is judged to belong to a predetermined group, and

(i)   if the in-group remaining number is not zero, duplicates the content for the apparatus, and subtracts the predetermined value from the in-group remaining number, and

(ii)   if the in-group remaining number is zero, rejects the management request, and

(2)   when the management request is the duplication request and the apparatus is judged to not to belong to the predetermined group, and

(i)   if the out-group remaining number is not zero, duplicates the content for the apparatus, and subtracts the predetermined value from the out-group remaining number, and

(ii)   if the out-group remaining number is zero, rejects the management request.

71.   **(Currently Amended)** A content duplication management system comprising an apparatus and a content duplication management apparatus that manages content duplications performed on the apparatus connected to a network,

said content duplication management apparatus including:

a request receiving unit configured to receive, from said apparatus, a management request indicating one of a duplication request for duplicating a content or a deletion request for deleting

the content;

a management unit configured to execute the management request received from said request receiving unit in order of arrival;

a holding unit configured to hold duplication restriction information indicating a number of permitted content duplications, wherein

said management unit,

(1)   when the management request that has been received first among the management requests that have not been executed is the deletion request, adds a predetermined value to the number of permitted content duplications, and

(2)   when the management request that has been received first is the duplication request and

(i)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is greater than the predetermined value, duplicates the content for the apparatus, and subtracts the predetermined value from the number indicated by the duplication restriction information,

(ii)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is less than the predetermined value, rejects the duplication request, and

(iii)   if the number indicated by the duplication restriction information is less than the predetermined value and the deletion request exists subsequent to the duplication request, executes, on an exceptional basis, the deletion request prior to the duplication request, and adds the predetermined value to the number indicated by the duplication restriction information,

wherein

said management step,

(1)   when the management request is the duplication request and the apparatus is judged to belong to a predetermined group, and

(i)   if the in-group remaining number is not zero, duplicates the content for the apparatus, and subtracts the predetermined value from the in-group remaining number, and

(ii)   if the in-group remaining number is zero, rejects the management request, and

(2)   when the management request is the duplication request and the apparatus is judged to not to belong to the predetermined group, and

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(i)   if the out-group remaining number is not zero, duplicates the content for the apparatus, and subtracts the predetermined value from the out-group remaining number, and

(ii)   if the out-group remaining number is zero, rejects the management request.